

Woodbury

A discourse

A DISCOURSE

PRONOUNCED AT

THE CAPITOL OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN THE

HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AT THEIR

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING,

JANUARY 20, 1837,

✓✓
BY THE HON. LEVI WOODBURY,

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

WASHINGTON:

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SIR:

WASHINGTON, *January 21, 1837.*

I am charged by the American Historical Society with the agreeable duty of presenting their Vote of Thanks, herewith enclosed, for the eloquent, interesting, and truly American Discourse delivered before them by you last evening, and to request the favor of a copy for publication.

I am, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

V. MAXCY.

To the Hon. LEVI WOODBURY,

Washington.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

January 20, 1837.

Resolved, That the Thanks of the Society be presented to the Hon. LEVI WOODBURY for the eloquent, interesting, and truly American Discourse delivered before the Society in the Hall of the House of Representatives this evening.

Resolved, That Virgil Maxcy, Esq., present to the Hon. Levi Woodbury the Vote of Thanks of the Society, and ask of him a copy of his Discourse for publication.

Extract from the minutes:

H. M. MORFIT, *Rec. Secretary.*

SIR:

WASHINGTON, *January 23, 1837.*

In reply to the request of the American Historical Society for a copy of my recent Discourse before them, communicated by you in so flattering a manner, I place it at your disposal; with much regret, however, that leisure has not been enjoyed to make it more worthy the kindness evinced by the Society.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY.

VIRGIL MAXCY, Esq., *Washington.*

DISCOURSE.

My remarks this evening will be more particularly addressed to the members of the "American Historical Society," who compose a part of this respectable audience.

The objects of that Society, as announced in its Constitution, are, "to discover, procure, and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of America in general, and of the United States in particular."

It is worthy of notice that these objects, so very important and interesting, are wisely made to embrace a range much wider than the usual topics of history.

The record merely of battles and changes in dynasties, or a series of chronological tables of all remarkable events, and which constitute the most general idea of the design of history, would, in the brief as well as republican career of the United States, be literally the "short and simple annals of the poor." Not much would be gained by adding to those the pittance, which in these respects is known of the rest of America,—a continent discovered but little more than three out of nearly the sixty centuries which have elapsed since the creation of mankind, and whose population, when not barbarous, has been much dispersed, comparatively few in numbers, and seldom devoted to undertakings of great novelty or splendor. But, if we enlarge our views, as becomes the elevated position of this society, raising and extending researches from records of important occurrences to the true use or dignity of history—the causes and consequences of those occurrences, and to every thing having a material bearing on man here in his social relations, whether natural, civil, religious, or literary, in their broadest senses, and we have before us inquiries of a noble and most attractive character,—sufficient also in number to engross the leisure which any or all

of us are able to spare from the occupations of busy life, and ample enough in their scope to employ the severest industry, or tax the loftiest powers of analysis and judgment. It might be granted that naked historical facts may alone form one valuable branch of attention, and that the mere "honest chronicler" can be useful in his sphere. Yet, unlike the ballad-singer and the bard who precede him in the early stages of society, to gratify the natural love of mankind for a knowledge of the past, he must, if discarding all that is fable, or embellishment, become very sterile, unpeople much of the poetic and legendary lore of his predecessors, reduce many marvellous events to a "plain, unvarnished tale," and, like an honest geographer as to the interior of Africa or New Holland, leave large, frequent, and provoking blanks. The only method of properly filling up such wastes in the history of a people recent in their origin, and absorbed chiefly in the arts and pursuits of peace, is that proposed in the constitution of our society.

Without dwelling on the minutiae of the various inquiries thus contemplated, it certainly will be admitted to promise most usefulness, if we devote the chief attention of our association to those topics which, in its peculiar position, are most accessible and most appropriate. But, while our labors are principally dedicated in this manner, nothing of an historical character on American affairs, which can be procured with ease, need be entirely neglected, however humble the document, or remote and apparently trivial in bearing.

If its contents throw new light on the progress, powers, or resources of any State, it is immaterial, whether it be only a newspaper or manuscript, or relate only to the voyage of some hardy fisherman to throw the hook or harpoon in unexplored seas, or to the description of even the smallest insect which glitters in the sunbeam; the shell whose couch is the "blue and boundless sea;" the ore, that sleeps beneath the mountain's side; or the plant, whose leaf is sometimes the shroud as well as food for both man and the worm. Strange as it may seem to some, without due reflection, if, singling out our first illustration, they might find that a thorough knowledge of the most diminutive of

the animal creation, its habits and history, may illustrate some of the most striking changes in the industry and comforts of a numerous population. Like that of the Hessian fly, for instance, it might enable large sections of our country to avert its ravages on the great staff of life, and yearly save millions of property from ruin; or, like that of the ship worm, may assist us to protect valuable portions of our navigation from premature decay; or, like the cochineal and silk-worm, originate new articles of aid in manufactures or of lucrative commerce.

A more accurate acquaintance with the signs of valuable minerals may also change the prosperity of whole States, by leading to the discoveries of lead, coal, iron, and salt, or more attractive but less useful gold. This has been evinced in our own day, within our own boundaries; and the qualities of a new vegetable, better ascertained or more fully employed, like those of tea or coffee, the cane, the hop, or cotton, may revolutionize the pursuits of a large territory, and carry wealth and refinement as well as comfort into the former abodes of poverty and wretchedness. (Note A.)

But, at this time, passing by the further particulars of inquiries like these, though your researches as an historical society ought not entirely to overlook any of the various tenants and products as well as qualities and peculiarities of our earth, sea, and air, encouraging the study of nature, and cheering forward our Audubons, Nuttalls, and Featherstonhaughs, to explore her secret haunts in her rudest and wildest retreats; and passing by the history of all the neighbouring nations, colonies, and islands within the limits of the Western hemisphere, though affording much useful matter for warning, and some for imitation, it seems more suitable for us to give precedence to those historical researches which are more immediately connected with the peculiar position of our society at the capital of these still happy and united States. Fortunately, we are established not only at the seat of their General Government, but not remote from the great marts of commerce; surrounded, at no inconvenient distances, with extensive libraries and flourishing literary institutions; near the centre between the northern and southern frontier.

of our extended Union, as well as at the real centre of intercommunication for foreigners of distinction, and for the army, navy, legislators, judiciary, and travellers of every grade and character.

Hence, the opportunity enjoyed here which is greatest, and which should be first and most sedulously improved, is to render complete the history of our own Government, in all its general operations under our present constitution. Here are the records, and the most ready access to correspondence, in connection with so cardinal an object. Much has been already done in several publications in this city to throw light on the formation of the existing system as well as on the official proceedings under the old confederation which preceded it. No small gratitude is due to several now within sound of my voice, for their laudable exertions to enlighten the present generation, on the ability and untiring patriotism displayed in the legislation, diplomacy, and wars, not only of the Revolution but the few years immediately succeeding. (Note B.)

But, if we duly cherish our own reputation, and aspire to meet the just expectations of the rest of the Union, we ought to exhaust every remaining source of historical illustration on such important points. Further and without doubt successful efforts can be made to exhibit the true causes and consequences of the leading measures of that age of trial, and to give to the interesting events which have followed, under the General Government, even to the present times, their true "form and pressure." On this point much is justly expected from the manuscripts of the venerated Madison, whose immediate, elevated, and long agency in those political scenes, gave him opportunities of knowledge possessed by few, if any others. Considering the violent party agitations which have prevailed during most of that period; the history of it, if left to accident or prejudice; to only single-handed effort, one-sided knowledge, and one-eared justice; to the mere passions of the moment, or the calumnies, colourings, and distortions of the day; other nations would be led to form very unfavorable views of the character and tendencies of our Government, and posterity would be tempted most unjustly to believe, but for the host of blessings transmitted to them, that their fathers were

little better than the "convicts" they have so often been called in reproach by some of their worthless libellers.

Let it then become a prominent part of our duty as members of this society, to strip from the statue of Truth all such meretricious and false disguises. Let it not be said of us, when inquirers for facts, as Aristophanes describes the Athenians,

"No matter what the offence,
"Be't great or small,
"The cry is tyranny, conspiracy."

But, when we enter the sacred temple of History, let us put off the partisan of the day, whether in religion or politics, as well as discard our favorite theories of philosophy and political economy, and seek faithfully to do justice to the most calumniated.

Let us strive to correct mistakes in fact; remove errors in opinion; preserve important discoveries and arts from perversion or loss; illustrate the dark and doubtful in character, and preserve from the corroding tooth of Time every thing among us which may be useful and honorable to the land of our birth and adoption as well as to the human race. In this last undertaking, acting in some degree as impartial judges on the bench of posterity, we should investigate with ermine unsoiled, and with all those lofty attributes worthy the goddess who holds the equal scales among mortals.

Hence our scrutiny cannot be pushed too wide or too far. We must take neither Catholic nor Protestant accounts of religious events, neither federal nor republican views of political measures and motives, without due allowance for prejudice, and due comparisons of probabilities and conflicting testimonials. In fine, we should hold the mirror up to facts and nature alone, and invoke every just and honorable feeling to aid us in judgment on the long array of the past.

The particular topics of inquiry in this branch of our history are so numerous that, notwithstanding their interest to many, the fear of being tedious must prevent me from presenting a special enumeration of them. (Note C.)

The next most appropriate object of research, and which is

intimately connected with the other as a ramification of it, would be the progress of our foreign relations, whether on this or the Eastern continent. All the archives in relation to them are peculiarly connected with the capital of the Union, and the means afforded here for the correction of errors, by intercourse with the distinguished representatives of other Powers, or by correspondence at home and abroad with persons able to communicate valuable information, are unequalled.

United with this are extraordinary facilities for throwing more light on our early history while dependent on some of those Powers, and of drawing from their official records, through their courteousness and liberality, much that may be useful, not only in respect to our general concerns, but the local annals of various States on this continent, of whatever foreign origin.

To all these could be very appropriately added, at this central point, collections of specimens in botany, mineralogy, and conchology, as well as in several other branches of natural history. Our treasures of marl and of lime, from shells and stones, which may thus be explored and flung open to profitable use in agriculture and the arts, are probably unrivalled.

The whole range of Indian history, and the illustration of it by their relics and traditions, come likewise most naturally within our appropriate province, situated at the centre of the civil control over Indian concerns, and at the common point of resort and intercommunication for every important tribe.

What was the origin of these numerous tenants of our forests? What were once their arts? What do their overgrown mounds and scattered fragments of ruined cities, their romantic traditions, and, among the wildest, some recently given to the world by the enterprising Catlin—what do these and the hidden lore in their singular languages and scattered hieroglyphics and paintings indicate? What do their historical wampums—their mysterious quipos or Peruvian knots develop to the patient inquirer?

What do they all teach of their destinies in by-gone times, when they had neither well-balanced government nor the art of printing to preserve the annals and grandeur of their various careers?

What disasters drove or what advantages tempted them to erect cities on heights of the Andes, above the tops of the loftiest mountains in our own regions? When and what earthquakes or other physical convulsions, by winds and tides, may have separated this great continent from Europe, Asia, or Africa? What false or bloody religions may have depressed and deluded them? What inscrutable doom has hung and still hangs over their decay and dispersion?

Such inquiries as these, if less useful to provide historical materials to advance the prosperity of this and future ages, are yet objects of liberal curiosity, and debts of gratitude and justice, if not of atonement, in some cases, due to the races which preceded us in these fair and fertile regions. Amid the atrocities almost inseparable from the condition of savage life, those races frequently displayed great hospitality and heroic devotion to our fathers. Their history, thus far, has been too often written only by enemies; and when, as sometimes is the fact, the authors were smarting under their barbarities, frankness requires us to admit that they have occasionally proved unjust if not vindictive.

If King Philip, the great Sachem of Pokanoket, could have stood on the summit of Mount Hope and stretched his eyes over the rich rivers and beautiful bays of his Narraganset dominions, and not have sighed at abandoning them, nor amid stifled regrets and pangs at parting, have fought to defend them, he would have been unworthy his station, and have justly deserved the execrations of history.

We, ourselves, may yet learn useful admonitions from the annals of even such savage examples, if well considered; and be proud while lamenting, as we ought, their ignorance, superstitions, and cruelty, if we, when menaced by invasion from abroad, or by intestine divisions at home, may be able to imitate the exhortations and sacrifices to union, the bravery and prudence, if not, in some respects, lofty patriotism of such men as Philip and Tecumseh!

But my main purpose on the present occasion is to advert more fully to some of the deductions and influences to be derived from historical researches like those previously alluded to,

and pursued, with the spirit enjoined, into the true character of American affairs in general, and especially of our own Government and people. The lessons of wisdom which our annals, when rightly read, are thus inculcating, constitute their most conspicuous excellence.

It is thus that history becomes the useful schoolmaster of every age. Its pupils are the living—its lessons the monuments of the dead, in the record of their principles and their deeds. Their virtues are held up for adoption; their vices for abhorrence; their errors for correction and warning; their glory in arts or arms, in literature, in the sciences, or government, for admiration and useful emulation.

What then has been the peculiar influence of the events which have transpired here since Columbus daringly turned the prow of his vessel into an unknown ocean, and first beheld the shores of a new world darkening the horizon? Or even since the pilgrim fathers stepped on the rocky beach of the East? Or the chivalrous Smith landed at Jamestown, surrounded by a new and admiring race?

What has been the result on America itself? What on Europe? What on the world at large?

In tracing these inquiries into minute details, it is useful to seek all which has been disclosed that is important as to commerce and the arts, or letters and arms, and the various and splendid works of nature, as well as human rights and government, and the last and best hopes of man in religion and the future improvement of our race. In brief, we may ask, What does history teach us has been the true philosophy of the whole?

By the discovery of a continent, before unknown, there burst upon the numerous races inhabiting its forests, the knowledge, so marvellous to their untutored minds, of the existence of the Eastern hemisphere, and of a people whose civilization made them appear at first to be demi-gods. This was soon followed by some faint conception of the useful character of the reviving letters, as well as of a religion, calculated, one would have supposed, if properly diffused, not to lead to the extirpation, conquest, or degradation of the aborigines, but rather to their

elevation to all which might rival the loftiest and best in the old world.

It might at that crisis have been fairly hoped that the change on the Indians themselves would have been more salutary and glorious than even on the Europeans. But, notwithstanding the brilliant visions which illuminated their horizon, history has blasted almost every fond anticipation indulged, and has presented the destinies of the former inhabitants of the new continent under almost one indiscriminate and total eclipse. It is true that Eliot and "the good Las Casas" early preached the cross of Christ among them. A Brainard and others have since perished in the cause of Indian reform, burning with enthusiasm to cast down their false gods. Schools have been sometimes established among them; agriculture and the arts often encouraged. But a desolating blight seems to have spread over the whole native race, crushing the expectations of the philanthropist, saddening the heart of the Christian, and almost extinguishing further hopes of great benefits from those exertions which a sense of duty and the calls of humanity still prompt us to persevere in making.

Mortifying as this has been to the pride of more enlightened human reason, and a purer religion, engaged in the civilization of the savages, it is almost equally mortifying that few can agree about the principal causes of these repeated failures. Probably they have been many and various, (note D,) but the discussion of them would occupy much space; and, amid all the errors and wrongs as well as commendable efforts of two or three centuries on this lamentable subject, the only useful deduction from their history which time will now permit me to notice, is, that before any thing permanently beneficial can be effected for them, above all, and beyond all, must they be induced to co-operate together, and, burying former animosities and revenges, to unite heartily as one people, in all the great general relations of society.

This alone will afford leisure, taste, and resources for real civilization. They have long been a living monument, we will not say of the judgments of Heaven, but certainly of the folly consequent on divisions among the same race into paltry tribes, and like most of the clans of olden time, wasting their mutual means

and energies in mutual aggression, instead of finding leisure or cherishing propensities for the pursuits of peace and national improvement.

Perhaps, in the wisdom of Providence, they have in this respect been designed as beacons to warn us from the paths of division and ruin ; and the best philosophy of their history to us, and the most useful lesson to be extracted from it for them, is probably the importance, not only of suitable education in arts as well as in letters, but of union in governments, and union in efforts for common prosperity, rather than a blind indulgence in jealousies of each other, and a perseverance equally relentless and fatal in border hostilities ?

But, leaving the influence of Europe upon the original inhabitants of America, their past fortunes, as well as future prospects, what weal or wo does history prove that the discovery of this country has in return been the means of conferring on the rest of mankind.

It would be extremely difficult to calculate with accuracy either the stimulus or expansion given to the human mind wherever civilization prevailed, by only the announcement of the ascertained existence of a new world. Imagination had before painted some islands in the blue West, like the Atlantides of Plato ! Tradition, in the North, if not history, had also spoken of Greenland, and such emigrations as that of Madock from Wales, to regions remote and unknown.

Notwithstanding the denunciations of the Vatican, astronomy too had dared to speculate on the formation and character of the earth as a planet, so as to fill such souls as Columbus with enthusiasm for the search of new continents, or new routes to older and distant kingdoms. But now fancy, fable, hypothesis, tradition, were all to be lost in a glorious and astounding reality ! A new world, vast in extent, abundant in population, and gorgeous with fertility and gold, was laid open to the admiring eyes of the Eastern hemisphere ! What rich themes for the historian ! What a range for the geographer, naturalist, and adventurer ! What visions for the poet ! What fresh incentives and materials for commerce ! What a theatre for the philanthropist !

In the more rapid revival of literature and wonderful extension of foreign trade, but still more in the progress of wealth and intelligence among the lower classes, as well as of political rights, and a reformed religion over considerable portions of Europe, since that magnificent discovery, no doubt exists that much is justly to be ascribed to the influences derived from that remarkable event. Especially must it be so if coupled with the subsequent exploration and settlement of America, thus including her bright example since, as well as her strong impulses at first.

Beside the general expansion, influences, and impulses thus imparted almost every where and to every subject or pursuit, many important articles of commerce were flung open to the Eastern world, and some useful seeds, plants, and animals were transferred to improve and enrich the great discoverers.

A single American vegetable, the humble potato, has alone more than repaid Europe, in real wealth and comfort, for all the expenses of the discovery, and seems destined to prove a greater blessing to mankind than the whole of the precious ores, which attracted so strongly the first voyagers, or which have since been drawn from the prolific mines of the South.

But, such topics sink in importance before those improvements in the civil and political condition of mankind which have become the great characteristic as well as glory of this Western hemisphere. Certain it is, that, from the first visit to its shores, or, at all events, from the earliest durable occupation of the territory which now composes these United States, America was regarded by many as peculiar in its destinies, in connexion with the governments east of the Atlantic, and as fitted, from its distance, attractions, and resources, if not in time to react upon and regenerate Europe itself, at least to drain it of some of its most useful population, and become the asylum of the persecuted and oppressed of all nations.

Whatever may have been the comparative physical powers of its native inhabitants, and whether its vast territory, mountains, rivers, and lakes—its condors and mammoths—were diminutive, and hence, as Buffon and some others supposed, the European man was likely to degenerate here, it is hardly necessary at this

day to discuss. Notwithstanding any such impressions then, this country soon became, not only a refuge for the distressed, whether driven into exile by the ordinary calamities of social life, or by fanaticism, bigotry, and intolerance in religion, or by the vindictive bitterness of political hostility, but the chosen abode of myriads of the best and bravest spirits of that chivalrous age. In taunts, by our defamers, we have since been often vilified as a "colony of outcasts," whose "Adam and Eve emigrated from Newgate." But, yielding that a very few, as in all new countries may sometimes have "strayed in error's path," yet, the great mass emigrating hither are well known to have been the enlightened and patriotic—such men as "know their rights, and knowing dare maintain;" having equal readiness and fitness in both body and mind to encounter the perils of inclement seas, frozen shores, and ferocious savages, rather than submit longer to the endurance of the bitter oppressions inflicted on them in Europe by the parasites of power and the tyrants who upheld them.

In brief, as history has amply shown by their wonderful success, they were men suited not only at first to subdue a wilderness and cope triumphantly with barbarians, but afterwards to wage a victorious struggle with bigotry, persecution, and usurpation, from their former homes. It is true, and their descendants have never otherwise pretended, that not many of them were devotees of the fine arts, or the fashionable, or the titled, from the purlieus of St. James's or Versailles. Without derogating from the proper merits of any of these classes in their proper spheres, or under other political systems, our ancestors are conceded to have been mostly *homines res agendæ*,—men truly fitted and thoroughly devoted to the practical affairs of life. But it must not be forgotten that they were, at the same time, men intelligent and intrepid in matters of government and religion, as well as in ordinary business; and being so, that they were such men as ought to, and will, by their unconquerable constancy and skill, not only advance their fortunes and foil opposition, but virtually govern the world, whenever the world is enlightened, moral, and free.

They will do this, not because ambitious and designing, but

because best qualified to defend the hearth and the altar when in jeopardy, and, by useful arts and honest industry as well as by arms, to build great and prosperous communities. Like Themistocles, they and many of their descendants could proudly say, "I am unable to play on the flute, but I know how to make a large state from a small one." Humble as some of their general traits of character may appear to many, the history of passing events, as well as of the past, shows that their labors have not been lost on Europe any more than on America, and that, by means of them the latter has gradually become not only the land of plenty, but of promise, to large portions of the other empires of the earth.

From Cromwell and Hampden, who attempted in vain to emigrate hither; and from Locke and Berkeley, who generously labored to improve our institutions, as well as from the numbers, whether Independents, Huguenots, or Catholics, who, undaunted, actually encountered every physical suffering to escape from what were considered worse evils at home of a religious and political character—from their whole heroic efforts, sacrifices, and triumphs, a spirit or a change in society has moved over the face of this great continent, and at last recrossed the Atlantic.

It is now pervading the best parts of the old world, and though, since the discovery of America, it has been much assisted by lessons derived from antiquity, and much by the arts, and principles, of several modern nations in Western Europe, calculated to renovate and improve, yet this great change has been more emphatically and immediately the result of exertions, experiments, and example here.

This spirit or change relates chiefly to the wider diffusion of civil and religious liberty.

The peculiar teachings of our history consist chiefly in pointing out the causes and preservatives of this spirit, its peculiarities, its proper limitations and guards, its consequences in benefits and glories, its perils, securities, and hopes!

A few words as to some of its causes. When we look back to the great experiment which has been moving onward here for two centuries, it is at once discovered that little of our success

has depended on physical advantages. The Southern portions of this continent have exhibited as mighty rivers, as fertile plains, and lofty mountains, and genial climates, as in the North and West ; and, without wishing to draw comparisons either invidious or derogatory, we are forced to trace the differences of progress in arts, power, and government, to much higher sources.

In truth, the causes of the great changes now under consideration have been imbedded much deeper in mind than in matter, and been accompanied by some of the most remarkable moral phenomena since the creation.

The condition of many of the first settlers here led them at once to commence, if it did not impose on them the necessity of a thorough course of training for self-government. Hence, most of their rulers were, from the first, voluntarily chosen, and it was not till some stability in business and progress in wealth were attained, chiefly by their own exertions, that many of the colonial establishments were deemed of sufficient importance to tempt from abroad the interference of much regulation, domination, and persecution, in the shape of government. But the neglected condition of the first establishments ; the daring character of the early emigrants ; their habits of self-possession and self-legislation for most exigencies ; the entire freedom of thought, feeling and opinions they gradually cherished, and the feebleness of delegated power when imposed from so great a distance as Europe, kept up a constant education for independence, which must, without any temerity, or a tax on tea, or the odium of stamp duties, have been consummated on some other early occasion, whenever sufficient strength and numbers were obtained, and any slight provocation occurred to cause an explosion. "Coming events" had for some time "cast their shadow before." Their institutions and habits had made men bold, but not bad ; hardy, intelligent, equal, plain-dealing, and just, though enterprising and shrewd ; had promoted the employment of the faculties in useful action rather than the embellishment of them, and had reared gallant soldiers, intelligent farmers, industrious and scientific mechanics, and practical lawyers for leaders, rather than mere scholars, or only the sometimes weak inheritors of office.

Such leaders, too, were not simply the Brutuses or Catos of antiquity, but they were the compatriots of multitudes imbued like themselves with greater useful knowledge, with a higher code of morals and purer religion, and with faculties sharpened and strengthened by the experience in government and improvement in arts of two thousand more years.

The institutions established, as well as the principles cherished, all, therefore, tended to a new, radical, and great result. Unlike most other people in their origin, they experienced here no long infancy of ignorance, or barbarism, but at once started into being, elevated by and enjoying the aid of all the useful improvements as well as learning and morals of the most civilized nations of the known world.

It is manifest, likewise, that they brought with them, early as on board the *May Flower*, or late as the arrival of Penn, the elements of future resistance to every species of tyranny over the human mind. Though some of their views were yet crude, and, as might be expected, all the rights of man were not so well understood as after the struggles and popular victories of two more centuries; still, the stern resolve to be no longer "a mere shadow of what others say and-do," in either politics, religion, or manners, had distinctly appeared in the very causes of the emigration of most of them. The increasing wealth, as well as education and rights of the lower classes in portions of Europe, had previously, though gradually, been developing there for one or two centuries, under every species of thralldom from official opposition in most of her monarchical governments. A settlement in America presented not only an asylum to those classes when wronged, whether persecuted for opinion or cloven down in some contest for freedom at home, but a theatre on which their theoretic views of liberty of conscience, and equal rights, removed so far from the strong arm of despotic power, would sooner be allowed a fair trial, without incurring the danger of martyrdom, or of perishing on the scaffold with such men as Sidney, Russel, and Vane. It was more distant, also, from the blandishments, the wiles, and the seductive appliances of a court, and was soon surrounded and sustained chiefly by spirits of a

kindred training with their own. But, without dwelling longer on such details, the general features of our whole history previous to the Revolution, evince that America, besides being a retreat for the persecuted, was regarded at first and to the last as a favored abode of the hardy and industrious, and the peculiar resort, not of dignitaries in church or state, or drones of any kind, but of those devoted to new enterprises and lucrative commerce, and who would dare to settle on a cold, inhospitable, and iron-bound coast, as readily as on the sunny and fertile banks of the Delaware, the Savannah, or the Mississippi, if they could but plant quiet and free homes among the snow and granite, and fish up a profitable livelihood from the depths of the ocean—trap the beaver among his mountains and lakes, or hunt the whale with success at either the equator or the poles. In fine, whether at the North, the Centre, or the South, it was considered the home, as it is now the glory chiefly of the middling and laborious classes. These classes, accustomed to rely on their own energies in private life, and smarting under taxation, intolerance, and monopolies, in their former abodes, aspired to breathe the freer air of some other region, where, though remote, unfriended, and solitary—though strangers at first, and environed by almost every species of peril, they might be governed in public life also, by their own judgments, as well as by their own interests and useful laws. Most of the emigrants, and their descendants, were likewise persons very equal in rank, business, property, and education, and such mainly as felt the strongest attachment to the great republican doctrines of liberty, as taught by the school of Harrington and Hampden. Above all, they were men deeply impressed with religious principle as a guide, and their constant efforts were to acquire for themselves, and transmit, unimpaired, to others, a full knowledge of their duties, no less than a full enjoyment of their rights and powers, as being free, enlightened, accountable, and immortal. In these last circumstances are concentrated two cardinal and conservative principles of their whole system. They are the principles which, fundamental in their nature, chiefly sustained them before, as well as during, the crisis of the great struggle for independence, and

which have since contributed most essentially to push forward our country with such rapidity to its present unexampled condition of prosperity. Those principles were the promotion and indispensable necessity, under their free institutions, of a high degree of practical education and sound morals. Without these, whatever other numerous advantages our ancestors possessed in their Saxon origin—their general equality—soils so exuberant—fisheries so prolific, and navigable waters so extensive, they either would have been incapable of self-government, from ignorance of the true extent of their rights and the proper safeguards for them by means of suitable Constitutions and laws ; or they would have become so impracticable, divided, and weak, as to have passed under a foreign yoke. Or they would have proved so unprincipled and craven as to have bartered the substance for the shadow, and accepted, at the Revolution, if not chains, yet an unequal compromise with the parent country, for the aggrandizement of a few, which would have forever branded them with dishonor. Or since, as well as previously, they would, without just pretence, have made claims and resorted to ferocious outrages on individuals or feebler nations, from whatever cause obnoxious, which would have destroyed the confidence of the world in their integrity, and, if not leading to counter revolutions or restorations, would probably have wrecked many of their most valuable institutions. But, elevated and ameliorated by those principles, they were always men as different from Romulus and Remus, and their wolfish aggressions on the neighboring people, and from the Barbarossas of more modern eras, as were the Christian from the Pagan codes of morals, or the nature of the education of the Puritans from that of banditti and buccaneers.

Nor ever since (we may justly exult) has the spirit of plunder or conquest been allowed to stain a single page of our annals. On the contrary, we see every where, and in every thing, the astonishing results of that practical education, and those sound morals, operating on a people so fortunately situated. From the very outset it taught them the importance not only of free schools, libraries, and colleges, as means or instruments for ad-

vancement—but what precedes even them in time and utility—strict parental discipline at the fire-side, thorough acquisition of trades and professions, and the beneficial instructions of the pulpit and the forum.

It taught them also to make actual experiments as well as improvements on what had already been learned, or, in some sense, to combine study and practice, by mingling in the administration of justice as jurors; exercising fearlessly the right of voting at the polls; and all, or nearly all, taking a constant and legal, as well as large part in the management of those miniature republics, consisting of districts and towns, as well as in the disposal of county and state affairs.

Their system of free-schools was generally one of the strongest foundation-stones of the whole fabric; and we can trace in their legislative records, the establishment of them as early as the first twenty-five years of their settlement. Most persons, though childless, wisely considered their property and persons so fully protected and benefited by the education of the children of others, as to make the tax for this purpose just and salutary. This system, in various ways, is believed to have since extended its ramifications or influences over most of the Union; and though in some States yet unattempted in form, and in many yet deficient in attention to inculcate the elements of great moral and political truths as fully as a knowledge of mere letters, it has, with admirable retributive justice, called to its aid, in other States, all the taxes and penalties inflicted on the minor vices of society. (Note E.)

But, besides these and much more of details connected with the origin and progress of elementary education here, and which however interesting, want of time compels me to omit, our history exhibits a favorable change of late years on the subject of books of useful knowledge, in their greater cheapness and multiplicity, as well as increased practical tendency.

The libraries of this country, whether public or private, are also becoming larger and more valuable, and the progress of invention by stereotype printing, by improvements in the manufacture of paper, and by steam presses, has contributed much to

facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, for both the ordinary and more select purposes of life. The daily press has thus become another most powerful auxiliary in teaching; and the number of newspapers in America is computed to have increased so as to be more than half as great as that which the wealth, population, and intelligence of the whole of Europe now circulate. While on some subjects all mankind feel and act much alike, our ancestors were wisely aware that a conventional mode of thinking on others is often formed very early, and in great strength, by books and associates.

Hence arose in part their great sagacity, foresight, and diligence in respect to early education; and thus, while in the view of the unlettered Indian, we, as they did, by our system of education, *spoil* his children for the chase and the inclination for interminable and ferocious war, we shall, it is to be hoped, always continue by means of it to spoil our own children for most of the purposes of either sloth, slavery, or despotism; and while, by proper elementary works, by competent teachers, and liberal pecuniary encouragement, we shall be able to point in every village school to such spoiled children as our Franklins and Hancocks once were, a constant progress will be secured, as well in the useful arts of life as in the preservation and improvement of our liberties.

In another branch of common instruction this country has advanced so far beyond most others, as to become a model for foreigners to examine and imitate. Thus, under the influence of just sentiments of humanity for even the lowest of our erring race, some of the States, and many private associations, have pushed education, literary and religious, not only into the almshouse, but the very cell of the criminal—and while enuring the body to habits of useful industry and accustoming the appetites to temperance, it has been attempted to superadd hopes of durable reformation, by increasing the knowledge of the rights of others, and strengthening the sense of duty to respect these rights. The means of higher education have likewise long existed here, and of late been much enlarged, though, for reasons hereafter detailed, they have usually been deemed of

secondary importance. Our practical intelligence always taught us to rely on the skilful surgeon rather than the mechanic, for amputating a broken limb; and though the mere literary classes have rather been regarded as the capital or ornament of the column than the column itself, which supports the social edifice, their labors have done much to solace, refine, and stimulate others, and often, as in the case of Davy and Napier, Black and Newton, have helped essentially to advance even the common arts and improvements of mankind.

Sound learning and true liberty have thus justly been described as leaning on each other for support; and if any tendency has ever been indulged here in public feeling towards any kind of monarchy, it has been as much the real, though unacknowledged monarchy of the learned professions and men of letters, as of the middling classes. The evident leaning, however, of the former class, has of late been, as they become more numerous, to spread wider among the latter, and to mingle more intimately with them, in practical studies and active pursuits, so as to begin to form rather a real *republic of letters*, more broad and equal, like our civil rights, and higher in the estimation of the whole community. All its members are thus more inclined to be, and to be acknowledged as actual *working men*, in their appropriate spheres; nor do most of them deem it at all derogatory to labor there quite as hard as those who guide the plough or wield the sledge and hammer.

If it be asked why our history has not been more prolific in institutions well calculated to aid in attainments of the very highest character in polite literature and the severe sciences, and what have been the consequences on our national character, and the progress of society here? we answer, that, without detracting at all from the utility of these pursuits, in proper circumstances, and by people of affluence or leisure, it must be manifest (and no American need blush at the acknowledgment) that the whole fabric of our political system has been, and still is, in respect to education, founded on the diffusion of elementary knowledge more widely among the people at large, rather than on the promotion of greater acquirements within narrow limits. It seeks

likewise, to bring information immediately useful to every door, and to tempt all to listen and learn, rather than to carry what is abstruse or ornamental into the higher circles alone, or to encourage those pursuits which, by their elegance or refinement in taste, are calculated principally to amuse the learned or fashionable, or to employ the leisure of the wealthy in an old and dense population.

This policy has been better suited to our youthful and equal institutions. It comported well with our condition in regard to the cultivation of vast and fertile regions of territory yet unimproved, and with a rapidly-increasing population, requiring first to be supplied with sound practical information on political rights and duties, with agricultural skill, and with manufactures and mechanic arts of prime necessity. Hence, though science, here as elsewhere, has more than once “walked the furrow with the consul swain,” yet, in the first instance, and no astonishment need be entertained abroad at the fact, we have generally (and commendably) been much more eager to become good axemen, ploughmen, and swordsmen than mere book-men. We have been more ambitious in such a stage of our national career to fill the hive of industry with new swarms, ready to distil honey and defend it, rather than to consume it. What have been some of the most striking consequences from this policy concerning education and equality of rights, as exhibited in our history, and more especially in later years? The whole mind of society, instead of the intellects of a few, has thus been excited. We have, in one sense, fostered a levelling principle; but it has been to level up, rather than down—by raising the low, rather than lowering the high.

The general influence of such a system has been to promote utility, instead of ornament or display; to ask the *cui bono* as to every project, private or public; to advance the comforts rather than the luxuries of life; to gratify the wants of the many rather than the caprices of the few; to carry “plenty through a smiling land” to every fireside, rather than the means of voluptuousness to the rich alone; to improve morals, school the feelings severely, and respect the decencies of society, more than embellish

manners; to encourage simplicity of life, directness of purpose, and purity as well as manliness and inflexibility of conduct; to strengthen rather than to polish, even at the risk sometimes of roughness, if not rudeness; and in lieu of effeminacy or an extraordinary mass of mental acquirements, to promote decision of character, and secure to all the perfect knowledge and use of a few great and simple truths in politics, religion, and civil rights, so as in all respects to form useful, "high-minded men," instead of "starred and spangled courts."

History shows that the public policy forced on us by the same salutary influences, has been to cultivate peace, commerce, and mutual benevolence with all nations, rather than to indulge in arms or conquest, and to rely on reason and justice for our rights more than on the arts of diplomacy or the *ultima ratio regum*. But, at the same time, we have done this without hazarding any unwise neglect of the latter, or declining a resort to force when required by honor or duty—reason before arms, but arms before disgrace. It shows, also, that though originally planted in most cases amidst idolatry and heathenism, we became, by the surpassing excellence of our political systems, as far removed from the propagation, by Mahometan violence, of the divine tenets of the Bible, though anxious peacefully to send them for the conversion of all nations, as we are removed from the fierce Corsair spirit of plunder, or the lust of warlike empire, which have so often inflamed and devastated much of the earth.

Hence have sprung our leisure, taste, and success in such numerous improvements in the arts of common life. In the best and widest pursuit of man, what various experiments on new seeds, crops, and dressings, on new farming-tools and new domestic animals, have penetrated almost every glade and mountain, and threaded almost every stream from the St. Croix to the Sabine !

Among the models which crowd our patent office—I should say which once crowded it—that pride and emblem of American ingenuity whose recent loss we all deplore—the plough, the harrow, the threshing-machine, the winnowing-mill, the hoe, and the churn, with a myriad of other instruments, improved or

invented to facilitate the various operations of agricultural industry, filled a large space, and showed strongly the practical tendency to absorb here so great a share of intellectual exertion, in the accomplishment of only useful results. How many have thus achieved in substance what Swift pronounced to be more praiseworthy than all the labors of mere politicians—the salutary, if not splendid improvement, of making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before.

The mechanic arts, as connected with agriculture and manufactures, have also profited greatly by this general impulse of the public mind. It is true that many of the greatest changes in the machinery for spinning and weaving have originated elsewhere; but they have been readily adopted, and much improved, in this country; and, aided by the wonderful results from the cotton-gin, whose invention and merits are exclusively American, have caused an entire revolution in the household economy of many of the States, and studded thousands of our waterfalls with thrifty villages. Performing here, by machinery, in the cotton manufactory alone, what a century ago would have required the manual labor of at least twenty millions of people, we have with avidity seized not only on that but all other labor-saving inventions, and done our full share in bettering and increasing what has in various ways contributed nearly as much as the introduction of printing, or gunpowder, to advance the wealth, comfort, intelligence, and consequent privileges of the middling classes among mankind.

The daughters of the mechanic or farmer, by such results, are able to wear ornaments which royalty would once have envied, and by other discoveries and improvements of a recent date, are decked with laces from our own sea-island cottons, of which both the fineness and elegance exceed all, either known or fancied, by the Sapphos or Cornelias of antiquity. The same impulse has led us to push researches still more deeply into commercial enterprises with distant regions—whether to the Frozen ocean, “the furthest Ind,” or the isles of the Pacific; and whether to bring back rich returns for our ice and rocks in the East, or for the abundant staples of the South. But, above all, after devi-

sing numerous changes to facilitate intercourse at home by newly-planned bridges and improved roads and canals, this impulse has at last, as has been better said in substance elsewhere,* placed upon them and on navigable waters, not only fleetier and more capacious vehicles and vessels, but substituted for animal power and sails, through American as well as English perseverance and skill, an element which has outstripped the winds in speed, almost annihilated time and space, and seems destined to advance the progress of nearly every art which civilizes and enriches man.

This new power has been taught, also, to enter the workshop and manufactory, as well as to course roads, rivers, and oceans—to speed the plough, the shuttle, and the spinning-wheel, as well as empty docks, excavate harbors, and plunge into the deepest mines. It is a curious historical fact that, though we are by some denied the merit of having first applied steam with success to navigation, and are confessedly a less numerous, less wealthy, less commercial, and less scientific people than our competitors for this great improvement, there are now upon our various waters more than six hundred steamboats to their four or five hundred, and, from the large size of many of our vessels, a greater excess in proportion of tonnage employed in steam navigation. By the frigate *Fulton*, we were first, also, to apply it to purposes of war, that great theatre where, perhaps, its greatest powers may yet be developed. By a singular combination of mechanical intelligence and skill, in several other instances we have converted philosophy into a means of security as well as wealth; and if Franklin, alone, had lived, and dared, as he dared, and drawn, as he drew, the lightning of heaven harmless from the clouds, it would have been an epoch in useful inventions and practical application of science to the safety of social life which alone would have immortalized the country of his birth.

Why are these themes so exhilarating and so engrossing to an American? Not that he is boastful of being the discoverer of more new powers than others, though he has succeeded in their application to more new and useful purposes, and which last,

* *Edinburgh Review*.

Lord Bacon considered as almost equally commendable, while it is manifestly quite as beneficial ; nor merely that he filled your patent office with more than ten thousand models of inventions and improvements—but that he has done those, and at the same time successfully introduced numberless others, without patents, and without hesitation, from a peculiar characteristic of our people, growing out of their wide-spread and practical education, evinced in their universal eagerness to better their condition—in their constant aspirations for advancement in the world—and in their readiness to adopt, at once, every advantage within their grasp, from regions however remote. Vanquishing all obstinate prejudices against novelty or innovation—existing too often still in benighted monarchies, and aided by the diversified origin of portions of our population, whether from the British Islands, the Rhine, or the Alps, the Seine, the Baltic, or the Tagus, our liberality and tolerating spirit have thus sought to extract and cherish every excellence from every climate and government, in every science and art. This flexibility of disposition, without servilely aping the habits of any one nation, has contributed to convert the country into a sort of social Pantheon, to receive within its limits the professed advantages of all other people, and as recommended by the great author of the *Novum Organum*, to bring them all *ad experimentum crucis*.

We are, in fact, the great laboratory of the world, to try every doubtful substance in the crucible.

In this mode our progress in the useful arts as well as in government, has been much accelerated, without serious political hazards or convulsions ; and our history has exhibited a feature from which still higher hopes of advancement among us hereafter may, with propriety, be indulged.

Seizing, readily, on all the treasures scattered through the records of the last six thousand years, or discovered and gleaned, from time to time, by our enterprising commerce in every habitable quarter of the globe, we make the whole world, in some degree, tributary to our progress. We take our stoves and wooden pavements as quickly from Russia as our machinery from England. We drink our tea as agreeably coming from the

worshippers of the Grand Lama, on the opposite side of the globe, as if we brought it from Brazil; and find our drugs as medicinal, and our figs as palatable from the Turk and the plains of Troy, as if they grew in Florida or Mexico.

We have drawn likewise for supplies of national names and examples, on Pagan as well as Christian—ancient as well as modern—civilized and savage models, wherever we find any thing deemed worthy of imitation. We seek all—visit all—imitate all—trade with all. We only ask if benefits can be received or conferred. In declaring our independence of foreign control, we never regarded ourselves as independent of either the commerce, arts, or literature of the great commonwealth of all civilized people—nor independent, whether individually or collectively, of the duties of kindness and reciprocal interchange of advantages; but rather independent of any political domination not freely established by ourselves, independent in our systems of legislation, independent in our modes of thought and action, and independent, as it becomes us always to be, as well as unmindful, of the frowns of the rest of the world, while convinced that, in the cause of conferring the greatest good on the greatest number, we are engaged in a cause which conscience approves, and pursue it by means to which reason and virtue have long given their sanction. But, conscious, from the spiritual principle within, when not debased, that “men would be angels,” and are often rashly aspiring, one of the great excellencies in our progress has been its general caution and moderation, and its vigilance not to be misled by that ambitious and restless principle. Though aiming at almost every thing—attempting almost every thing—accomplishing almost every thing, practicable, yet we have still been regulated by the severe training before alluded to—and have been restrained in most cases, however much has been said and speculated to the contrary, from wasting our resources and energies on impracticable schemes, attracted merely by their splendor or novelty. Whether mere day dreams of speculators as to moneyed enterprises at home, or enthusiastic theories for new political crusades abroad have been urged upon us, we have generally looked in all things to the cardinal test of

utility and safety ; and, however the shore may be strewn with occasional wrecks, the great mass of society have not usually looked thus in vain. Trying if not exhausting most of all that has yet been discovered—gleaning from all the known world—we are now, by the Southern exploring expedition, if favorable opportunities offer, about to push still further our researches into unknown latitudes—and if not adding to the treasures of science in perfecting the researches of astronomers, geographers, and naturalists, at least to increase the extent and security of trade in old if not new channels—on old if not new objects—and to perform an act of justice to other nations in contributing our share to the laudable efforts hitherto made by a number of them in the great cause of discovery. At least we shall no longer be censured for holding back our common exertions, common contributions, and common sacrifices to advance the knowledge of the surface of the earth, and in that way to improve our species. (Note F.)

This practical education, chastened and controlled as it has been in most cases by sound morals, has in fact rendered our history in many respects more like a picture of the imagination than a representation of real life, as man has existed in other ages and under different institutions.

Far be it from me to be understood as supposing that there has been no new impulse imparted elsewhere to the arts, or to human rights since Vandal irruptions have ceased to overwhelm nations, and that no salutary progress is making abroad in many governments by means of improved commerce and better examples, in the increase of democratic principles—liberal ideas—useful inventions—or more widely diffused education.

But my inquiries are limited, by the character of our society, solely to American history, and my claims in behalf of America or the United States in particular, are only to their striking influences or reactions on Europe itself—to their more rapid progress in improvements merely useful—to their more solid foundations of equal liberty and more liberal and concentrated application of all that exists elsewhere of practical profit and good for man at large, rather than the higher classes—than what has heretofore distinguished him in most other countries.

During the century and a half which preceded the Revolution, increasing, though under foreign restraint, from handfuls of feeble emigrants to a population of three millions, and opening respectable commercial intercourse abroad, we penetrated with the axe and plough to the first mountain ridges of our extensive territory. Even this was deemed a marvel, and excited the envy and cupidity of others to check our prosperity, monopolize our trade, and control our progress.

But, when emancipated from every species of interference from abroad, by achieving independence, and left to form those constitutions, establish those equal laws, which our condition justified, and to excite that enterprise and industry to operate more widely, which had already contributed so much to make us what we were, and to sanction all we hoped to be, history shows that, within about a half a century, or little more than the moiety of the life of many an individual, that population proceeded to increase from three to fifteen millions, that territory more than doubled, and widened from the Atlantic and its declivities to the Pacific; that foreign commerce augmented from a few thousand dollars in value yearly to over one hundred and fifty millions, each, of imports and exports; manufactures, released from colonial thralldom, extended in many branches, not only to supply fully the domestic demand, but added several millions to our foreign trade; agriculture bringing new staples to perfection, and, aided by mechanical ingenuity, furnished a raw material in cotton, for almost the whole of Europe as well as America; provided ourselves, in a large degree, with many of the other essentials of life, such as salt, iron, sugar and woollens, and scattered comfort and civilization, not only from the seaboard to the Alleghanies, but from the Alleghanies to the great monarch of rivers, and from him rapidly westward, till, ere long, it must reach the Rocky mountains, if not the Western ocean. Within the same brief period, that history describes us to the rest of mankind as having created a navy, secondary in size and efficiency to only two or three in the world; as having formed and sustained various institutions of enviable excellence, and done more to illustrate and perfect political economy than half the

ages and authors which preceded us ; because, uniting in our system the practical man and philosopher, and making one co-operate with the other in furnishing facts for science, and science for facts.

We have also conducted triumphantly several foreign wars and negotiations, and discharged all the burdens of one to two hundred millions of national debt, incurred in securing our independence and subsequent national privileges, as well as in enlarging our territory and building up all our inestimable institutions and great works of public convenience or improvement. Last, but not least, besides rendering common the use of written constitutions for the safety of human rights, in almost every quarter of the globe, not merely rights political, but rights civil and social, and well adapted to secure the whole against the causes and from the consequences of both violated charters and broken compacts ; we have, above all, furnished in the person and by the efforts of Roger Williams, the self-denying but resolute seceder, on the margin of an humble river, now adorned with manufactories, churches, and colleges, the splendid triumph of the great doctrine which soon spreading to Maryland and Pennsylvania, now pervades the whole Union, of entire liberty of conscience, and total freedom in religious matters from the dictation of civil power.

These are the obelisks and pyramids we have raised—the triumphal arches, built for posterity to admire ! These have been a few of the consequences of our principles. It is by these, and efforts such as these, that our march is still forward in a career of prosperity as unexampled as it is glorious. When our opinions are misrepresented—our institutions vilified—our ancestors and rulers assailed—we can proudly point to our history and say, “ By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Though in many respects we have ceased to be the infant Hercules, yet in others we are still, as Burke once beautifully said of us, quite in the gristle of youth, and it is hoped, aspire not to reach the hardness of manhood in all things, till every useful application of science to art, every practical progress in the great business of life as well as in government has been

attempted, and the whole moral grandeur of our national position and principles developed.

In such an indefatigable career in the pursuit of general usefulness to all, and by all, it is true, and far from derogatory, that we may not yet have collected the libraries of Gottingen or Oxford, because our true policy has been rather in the first instance to collect and educate a population suited to subdue the wilderness, establish manufactures, and extend commerce.

Nor may we have exhibited critics in the classics like Scaliger, Bentley or Johnson, because our earlier wants have been for critics in the forms of government, like Madison, and critics in the forms of law or administration of justice, like Wilson or Kent. We may not have educated mathematicians like Euler and La Place, or philosophers like Boyle, because our similar geniuses, such a Bowditch, have been more engaged in translating and applying the reasonings of others to navigation and practical life, and, as Franklin, Fulton, Godfrey, and a host of inventors and benefactors, in rendering useful to their country the doctrines, sciences, and discoveries of former ages as well as their own. Nor have we produced Byrons, Raphaels, and Canovas, nor courted the muses and the graces with as distinguished success in those thousand other attractive forms so common in older countries, because our ambition has rather been directed to what naturally precedes those in society, to the performance of deeds worthy the immortality conferred by the poet, the painter, and the sculptor.

It is mortifying to see our position in these respects so often and so obstinately misunderstood. The pert sarcasms of many might have been spared, had they reflected that the judicious here never presented claims for any peculiar distinction, however brilliant, occasionally, has been the success of many among us in belles-lettres, and all those pursuits which are the usual result of only great wealth and the amplest leisure. On the contrary, we have, with much superior wisdom, considering our true position, and probably with not less real talent, and certainly with equal industry, been principally devoted to the business much more natural, appropriate, and important, in

our youthful stage of society and with our vast physical resources, to the useful business of converting forests into fruitful fields, bridging rivers, spanning mountains with roads, uniting seas by canals, and making every hill and valley vocal with beings, industrious, moral, intelligent, and happy, by training, as far and fast as practicable, the whole population, whether wealthy or indigent, native or alien, to self-government, and the enjoyment as well as preservation of equal rights and well-regulated liberty.

What do your annals show has been the result of all this? Not the highest perfection in what the community generally, or the Government, never sought—in poetry, painting, statuary, monumental piles, or splendored architecture—but great success in the wise objects of their true ambition—in the enlightenment and comforts of the population at large, for whom and by whom the country has been conquered, planted, civilized, and ruled. By that policy and success we have, instead of remaining a people among whom to read was so rare when America was discovered as to confer an exemption from punishment by the benefit of clergy, become a universally reading people. Without the help of kings, peers, or prelates, as legislators, we have also become a writing and “calculating” people, more versed in the best elements of education than many of their titled ancestors; and among whom their language is, by the wide action of the press on the people and the people on the press, spoken with more purity and uniformity than the language of any country of similar size in Europe. A people better clothed than half the subjects of the proudest Edwards; a people better housed than those of the Henries; better furnished and fed than Elizabeth’s, and better protected in every valuable right than those of all the Williams and Louises of any age and nation. A people, in fine, who, rather than their rulers, are sovereign in all things, and being an educated and moral people, can be, and are, behind and over all their governments, safely empowered, as sovereign, to change or destroy at pleasure every institution and law, and reconstruct them in the peaceful mode established by their constitutions.

This consideration leads me to a brief notice of a few other

circumstances which have transpired here in connexion with our new constitutions and new systems of jurisprudence, which are among the most interesting to the human race of any that resulted from the discovery of America. As before suggested, while presenting during a century and a half, a theatre on which the oppressed and enterprising might exhibit more freely their various principles, aspirations, and experiments, for the improvement of man, the training for self-government on those principles, and in forms most acceptable to the majority of the governed, seemed at length to be nearly completed, when the Revolution rendered us independent, and prostrated every barrier which had before existed against putting all those principles into more efficient practice. The fruit of liberty had become nearly ripe for plucking, and hence was not destined to be in its taste, as in France, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere, so often like the apples of Sodom. Our fathers had read, reflected, and reasoned deeply, and knew society must be held together by some strong cement, or the inherent love for the state of nature and individual independence which actuates most human beings, would lead to separation or dissolution, if not to mutual aggression. That cement is usually a clear conviction of benefits to be derived from society, or is mere arbitrary power, accompanied sometimes by fraud and delusion. We had rid ourselves from the domination of any portion of such power in our former oppressors, and were to commence the task of moulding institutions which might in some way secure to us more perfect freedom, and at the same time be adapted to confer equal if not greater protection and prosperity. But a continuance of monarchy was so abhorred in any shape that it seems scarcely to have been dreamed of. Yet, in rejecting that or any other arbitrary power, as a cement or preservative, whether foreign or domestic in its origin, and however derived, it became obvious to the reflecting that an extraordinary substitute must be found in some other elements of political cohesion. Hence the prophets of royal prerogative were full of mischievous predictions as to the incapacity of our people to govern themselves, and as to an early catastrophe of the whole system. Even the friends of equal rights began to feel some

slight apprehensions at the prospect. But having ascertained, during the old confederation, that there must be a given or sufficient quantity of power in order to make a nation, like a planet, revolve steadily in its proper orbit ; and hence, if one kind of it, that from an arbitrary origin, was diminished, the other kind, that from a voluntary origin, and resting in the general information and sound moral principles of the community, with laws and government more beneficial and equal, established by them must be proportionally strengthened or increased—the founders of our present constitutions set about their new duties with earnestness and vigor. The wise, the good, and the talented throughout the land, all with a chivalrous spirit, co-operated in rousing the intelligence and virtue of the people to increased efforts in establishing institutions productive of the greatest benefits, not only to the separate States but to the Union. They thus guarded us against “the dark and dishonest intrigues” of kings abroad or demagogues at home, and prevented us from falling again into colonial dependance, or into those divisions, anarchy, and licentiousness, which are the bane of all national improvement. They co-operated, also, in creating those securities for property and person as well as for State rights—in fulfilling those obligations of public indebtedness, and in yielding that equal protection to all branches of industry which good faith and national prosperity required ; and in rallying, on every fit occasion, to the aid of order, law, and liberty, all the intellectual and moral energies of the whole population.

The true philosophy which, therefore, was made to pervade our new constitutional and legislative systems, was the offspring of this discovery of a necessity to make those systems a source of increased advantages to all affected by them, and to strengthen or secure government by greater attention to education and morals, and by making more frequent invocations to their aid in the absence of arbitrary power and severer laws. Hence they began by offering benefits alone, and by removing all restraints from expatriation by those who at any time might become discontented with their portion derived from the common fund of advantages, political and social, or be dissatisfied with

the umpirage of that majority in the Government which, though so often pronounced a tyrant, must lay the basis of all free society. They next were careful to leave neither individual nor State without a due share of rights, not only in the Government itself, but under it; to recognise politically no distinction of plebeian or patrician, and generally none of Catholic, Jew, or Protestant; to control neither the person nor property, where the individual had been educated to the self-management of them, except so far as was indispensable for mere public objects; to disclaim all power not voluntarily conferred; to make all government be regarded as a blessing, when and so far as it was resorted to, rather than an unnecessary restraint, and to impart civil power to and over none in any case, further than was necessary to enforce justly the laws of the majority. As a general rule, nothing but gross ignorance or vice were ever permanently put to the ban of exclusion from a proportionate participation in public affairs.

In order to ensure more certainly the faithful discharge of official duty, by all to whom power was with jealousy confided, one great characteristic of their political system has been its more complete separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of the Government from mixture, and thus rendering the discharge of duties under each of them more simple and easy. They also established much more rigid checks and balances in legislation itself, and official accountability has been greatly and almost constantly on the increase, by shortening the term of office, as well as surrounding it with other new guards and responsibilities. This frequent and full reckoning between the electors and the elected, exacts a more rigorous responsibility than generally has characterized any other government, however popular and free; and, while it may be open to the imputation of some encroachment upon individual and official independence, it secures, what in our system is generally deemed more essential, a conformity in official action with the known will and wishes of those who made and conferred the office, and who are chiefly to benefit or suffer by all the measures of men in office. It constitutes, also, a more effectual preventive to the

usurpations of power—power, which, in its general tendencies, is often insidious, voracious, and selfish ; which is apt to increase its appetite by indulgence, and which, unless vigilantly watched and frequently summoned to account, is prone to steal from the many to the few, till every vestige of real liberty is lost. The amplest authority was conferred to constitute a government both salutary and efficient for all useful purposes, but not a pittance for pageantry or oppression.

It will be perceived, from only these general suggestions, how different has been the character of our efforts here for self-government, from what they have often been elsewhere, whether in ancient or modern history ; and how strikingly most of the causes of their difference can be traced to that practical education and sound morals which have so thoroughly pervaded this country, and which may well be deemed the strongest citadel of our constitutions. On our Northern border, some sixty years since, the Colony whose co-operation was anticipated in the great struggle for independence, was visited by a mission from the old Congress, of whom Dr. Franklin was one, and well provided with pamphlets and manifestoes. The inhabitants, however, were found so generally ignorant as to be unable to read them ; and their condition in this respect appeared so hopeless, that, on his return, he recommended that the next embassy should consist of school-masters. What a signal illustration of his sagacity, and of the importance of education, is their history since !—showing that, after half a century more, they still remain in the same provincial subjection to a distant empire, and in almost the same torpid condition, as to the great principles of liberty.

Montesquieu and some others have mentioned virtue alone as the preserving element in popular governments. But this is an error, if virtue can be separated from intelligence, almost as fatal as that of supposing education alone to be sufficient. Our whole history shows that both have been intimately combined whenever we have prospered highly, and one or the other has always been defective, both in America and elsewhere, whenever a signal failure in self-government has occurred.

It shows, also, that the two, united, become, in a democracy,

the predominant if not only legitimate substitutes for arbitrary power. That they are our great Mentors—one to instruct us in our duties as well as rights, and the other to impel us onward to the performance of them; one to enlighten, the other to convince; one to prepare us for right action, the other to make us act, or to give us proper motives for exertion. The conviction of these momentous truths was therefore so deep, it led our ancestors to commence the indulgence of equal rights, in no case, till knowledge existed and correct principles had been thoroughly inculcated in respect to the use and character of those rights; instead of commencing, as in many other regions, the rude levelling of all distinctions of political rank and civil privilege, before many of those about to participate in them were acquainted with their true limitations or design, and before they were gradually trained, like those ancestors and ourselves, almost from the cradle, in their correct exercise and necessary discipline. Without this training, or the education and morals indispensable to perfect it, a grant of equal political power and consequently of almost unrestrained liberty, would be not only a harbinger but an invitation to unbridled license—to plunder, conflagration, and indiscriminate butchery. Such a course stands, therefore, condemned by reason, condemned by experience, condemned by all history. It would evince a hatred rather than love of our species, and prove a curse to all within its sanguinary and fanatical influence. Notwithstanding, therefore, some arrogant taunts on this subject from abroad, it would be usurpation and tyranny for any of the Governments under our restricted systems to attempt to adopt such a course towards any class of unfortunate beings, over whom no such authority has ever been confided to them by the people or the States, and probably from a just jealousy never will be confided. At the same time it would as clearly be the height of folly if not insanity for any Governments which may ever possess such authority, to offer at once perfect equality to candidates so uneducated, undisciplined, and in almost every respect grossly unqualified.

But when, how, and where the process ought to begin, are questions that have been perplexing in all countries as well as

here—that belong exclusively to such Governments alone as possess the power, and for their decision on which they are politically amenable to no other human tribunal, but only subject to that moral judgment of civilized mankind, and the great Governor of the universe, to which all intelligent beings are equally subject, for the correct discharge of every duty.

The practical education and views of our fathers in all things, led them, also, to devise new provisions, new guards, and new inducements for the preservation of the rights they established. Their history shows that, unlike many other reformers, they did not deem it sufficient to proclaim equality merely on parchment, or only in some organic law or charter, like a constitution—but they carried, gradually though firmly, in substance though not in exact form or with abstract and mathematical precision, the general principle of equality into common legislation and the usages of the social system, so as to secure what they had sought diligently, and to prevent the stone they had with great toil rolled to the summit from rushing back, as too often has been the case, and crushing, in an unguarded moment, the political labors of years.

To notice a few more of the particular consequences from this policy, it may be added that the tenure and distribution of property of intestates were in time rendered equal; and this alone struck deep and wide the roots of great uniformity of condition into our whole social system. The feudalities, unequal inheritances, and mortmains of monarchy, in respect to landed property, were also slowly abolished, breaking up with them most of the overgrown proprietary estates, and large possessions of every kind, and introducing almost universal freeholds and fee simples, so that every citizen could feel and be in some degree lord of the soil. The creation of exclusive privileges and monopolies of all kinds was discountenanced in theory, though not always sufficiently in practice. But, in progress of time, the useful substitute has begun to spread, which is more congenial to the intelligence of the present age and to the preservation of equality of rights, to permit and protect joint associations for useful objects and under salutary restrictions, but seldom to

make them exclusive. The elective franchise was also by degrees conferred on man himself, rather than the soil or estate he owned. Property as well as person was protected, but not made a new power or independent dominion in the State. The aristocracy of mere money, as well as the aristocracy of birth, was in time equally renounced in theory, and the progress of these improvements in changing many antiquated notions and abolishing certain remains of monarchical privileges or analogies, like the growth of the human frame, was wisely gradual, and in accordance with the acquisition of new authority, and the greater experience and intelligence of the community, and not so quick as to blind with sudden or excessive light, or to bewilder the weak, or to break down the unpractised with the excessive weight of unusual power and responsibility. The administration of laws and the enjoyment of equal freedom were not at once rashly conferred on infants in years or acquirements, on the incapable, the convict and the slave; but the dispensation of justice was allowed to be aided by all who were qualified to be jurors; legislation intrusted to and perfected by all who were educated and represented in it; arms allowed to be in the hands of all who had any thing to defend; and all the laws, like the shell of the marine animal, formed not to suit others, or by others, such as the inheritable *Lycurguses* or *Solons* of a monarchy, but to suit as well those who needed the laws as those the laws were destined to protect. Pursuing the analogy, they were thus afterwards changed with ease, as the growth and necessities of the community demanded. Thus have we wisely, but therefore slowly and in clear cases, moulded most of our legislation to suit the rights of our people, and the nature of their social condition.

Led by the sympathies in favour of our species, usually attendant on intelligence and virtue widely diffused, the public have sought reform and improvement with such commendable zeal and generosity, that even the lowest have not been overlooked. The real pauper, from infirmity of body or mind, has been not only maintained by law, but, when capable, has been furnished with useful instruction, to enlarge his faculties and

elevate his soul. Imprisonment for debt has also been generally abolished; humane and relief societies multiplied; asylums and hospitals for the insane, as well as sick, liberally established; and an eagerness evinced, by means of similar institutions, to pour intelligence, if not sound, even into the deaf; letters, if not light, into the blind; and language, if not speech, into the dumb. The penal code has been stripped of most of its Draco principles—abandoning sanguinary floggings, pillories, and tortures, as well as barbarous executions, it has become almost universally one of comparative mildness as well as of reformation. Beyond the spirit of the age elsewhere, and far outstripping its progress in these respects in all other countries, the greatest efforts have been made to prevent, rather than severely to punish, the largest class of crimes, and to rely more on the schoolmaster, the spelling-book, and the bible, for safety or improvement, than on the stocks, or the whipping-post, or the prison.

When man has thus been carefully educated to his political position, and all around him is in just keeping with it, the barriers of advancement are soon prostrated, and he becomes, in fact and in theory, the only monarch of the soil—the only author of his own laws—the sole arbiter, in most respects, of his own destiny. Then it is, that he possesses every motive, human and divine, to act, not with rashness, precipitancy, folly, or wickedness. The ballot-box is then the sovereign remedy for most political evils, instead of mobs, or riots, or revolution. The conflicts of opinion and interest are there, for a time, adjusted; injustice, extravagances, and excesses, defeated or chastened; and the differences of tastes or desires—the inevitable strifes of liberty and independence—are, for an allotted season, either softened or compromised, so far as regards their political operation, by the conclusive, though often mixed decision of the majority. Defeat, as well as occasional victory, come so often and unexpectedly, that the whole habit of the country is to bear both with moderation, if not philosophic resignation, and to rely on another trial at the polls, in due time for the correction of any former errors, rather than on a resort

to force. If the decisions there in regard to men and measures, produced by intrigue or temporary excitement, look sometimes like caprice, and prove to be real injuries to the voters themselves, as well as to others, they are usually soon reversed, on fuller information. For, as Lord Mansfield, (no strong friend of popular rights) once conceded, "the people are almost always in the right. The great may sometimes be in the wrong, but the great body of the people are always in the right." Revolution or rebellion, which, in extreme cases, ever will and must be exercised by those suffering under flagrant oppression, hopeless and irremediable in any other mode, is the extreme medicine, to be applied only in those extreme cases, and is not to become with impunity daily food. Indeed, when the supposed sufferer helps both to make and administer the laws, and if dissatisfied with the decisions of the majority, can generally withdraw, if, after repeated peaceable trials, unable to change them, there is little apology for an appeal to any demoralizing and disorganizing measures. Having a country and a government of his own to be saved, he is generally ready to sink or swim with their political destinies. But, if irregularities occur, under the deep impulses of an over-sensitive love of liberty, or a sudden delusion as to facts and principles, the true policy of our system is, and always has been, to indulge in leniency, if not forgiveness, and to seek future reformation by additional teaching in both letters and morals, rather than by inexorable severity. A reasoning, enlightened, and moral population, are to be managed rather by reason than force, and, under all disappointments and disasters, possess an inherent recuperative energy that prevents either despair or ruin. In such a population there is a *vis medicatrix* which will sustain the state against very violent shocks, and restore its institutions to a condition of safety or stability, after subtle encroachments or great indiscretion in departures from sound principles. Constitutions as well as laws, after deliberately established, are not thus in practice fickle as the breeze. But the disposition is wisely cherished, and very prevalent in our annals, to alter only what is manifestly wrong, and with great pertinacity to abide by whatever is found, after

due experiment, not in a great degree prejudicial to the common weal or to individual liberty and enterprise. While properly making all things in theory liable to change, as greater experience and information might require, our ancestors, since the Revolution, have dealt with caution and delicacy in legislation for the transactions of real life, and seldom entered into too minute and vexatious details, or countenanced very sudden innovations. They well knew that "the world had been governed too much," and that it was more secure and often more advantageous to stand by tried laws and institutions, though in some respects defective, than to embark constantly on doubtful schemes of supposed improvement in any thing and every thing which restlessness, rashness or ambition, passion or ignorance, might feel disposed to hazard. Hence, they bore various oppressions and much rank injustice, long as they were bearable and any hope was left of peaceable redress, previous to their resort to forcible resistance; and hence, the strongest reliance can always be since placed on the permanency of our institutions and laws, so long as they confer in any reasonable degree the benefits anticipated from them. Their maxims and practice have always been to advance, but to advance cautiously, *festina lente*.

It is true our people have generally sought liberty in all things, so far as consistent with the preservation of the social system in safe operation; and that they have trusted for protection much more to the better restraints of good education and sound morals, than to frequent changes or great severity in their laws. It is also true that, in doubtful exigencies, their general bearing has always been in favor of increasing liberty; but still it has not been liberty independent of law, or opposed to it, but liberty in conformity to law. They have sought the law of liberty, rather than the liberty to dispense with the law.

The freedom of the press, for instance, however perverted at times, or occasionally lowered in its legitimate influence by groundless and indiscriminate animadversions, was, at an early day, fully established here, unchecked except by being made legally subject to punishment for flagrant wrongs.

From Milton's "speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing,"

published about the time many of our fathers emigrated hither, to the expiration of the celebrated sedition law, as well as since, the idea has "grown with our growth," that a still more effective remedy to prevent the licentiousness of the press, or the tongue through the press, is rather to be found in public intelligence and sound morals, than in the prison, or the pillory, or in personal violence inflicted thoughtlessly on its indiscreet conductors. However, then, we may lament its occasional prostitution, mingled, it is admitted, with many excellencies, and however we may regret the manifold abuses of free discussion and liberty of speech as well as of the press, yet they all rest on imperishable principles. Experience shows that real merit lives down most calumnies, and that time so far destroys or corrects the evils, whether of the press or the tongue, that of all the dunces who assailed the Popes, Chathams, or Burkes, of former days, their slanders and themselves have mostly sunk into one common oblivion, except as preserved by the unnecessary notice of those they vilified.

True liberty here in any thing, never can be the mere Gothic license of irregularity or violence. The numerous examples of history, as well as ordinary intelligence and plain common sense, teach us that such a liberty is more full of disasters, more ruinous to the cause of uniformity in rights, security of person or property, orderly happiness, and prosperous greatness, than a tyranny the most miserable, partial, and bloody. Such a liberty lays the axe at the root of society itself, and renders every thing a prey to the inequality and injustice of mere brute force, ignorant passion, or unbridled wickedness. If any thing called law then remains, "lust will become a law, and envy will become a law, and covetousness and ambition will become laws." But the liberty sanctioned by our fathers, and pervading all our institutions, is the liberty created and sustained not only by law, but that kind of law which, with calmness and sound deliberation, is previously promulgated by an enlightened public will, to be the true rule of right; and of the pure spirit of which, in the eloquent description of Hooker, "no less can be acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony

of the world." It is the liberty not to trample on the rights of the weak and the poor, any more than to assail and undermine those of the strong or the rich ; but the liberty, even fastidious or scrupulous, to enjoy those rights, as fully by the one class as the other, both under the shield of legal protection, but neither under monopolies, and both equally invulnerable under the broad panoply of sacred constitutions, wholesome statutes, and upright as well as intelligent judicial tribunals. Nor is liberty considered here, as it often is abroad, to consist properly in opposition to the existing government—a government in most countries imposed on the people at large no less than on the wretched, by conquest, doubtful inheritance, or force and usurpation—but it is evinced rather by a support of the useful operations of that government here, which all have virtually united in devising and profiting by. As little is liberty displayed here by a bitter dislike to the laws, on the ground that "the world is not one's friend, nor the world's law," because the law here is usually the friend, the child, the ally of all, as all who are qualified, help to make the law, all repose under its shelter, and most people duly appreciate the benefit of enforcing it. Hence, as a general truth, every eye here is vigilant, and every hand armed to detect and punish ordinary offences, as well as to expose official misdemeanors ; and the pride, ambition, interest, and duty of the whole community, are arrayed on the side of order, and in support of their own constitutions and laws. Nor ought they ever to grant the liberty to oppress any one class, party, or sect, but the liberty to all of them, of enjoying freedom of speech and discussion within the limits before mentioned, and of obtaining immunity from oppression, and redress for injury, through the established legal channels. Not, in their private capacity, to be their own avengers, and redress wrongs, either of person or property, punish crimes, make and unmake laws, constitutions, or appointments to office ; but to do them all in the respective methods, regular, public, and constitutional, which equality, justice, sound knowledge, sound morals, and all the lessons and admonitions of history point out as salutary and safe : that is, through the jury ; on the magistrate's bench ; in authorized con-

ventions; legislative assemblies; at the ballot-box, or the polls, and in proper executive stations.

Liberty thus regulated and enforced, becomes the champion rather than antagonist of law, and the strongest bulwark of social order. Fortunate people! Happy country, if all the teachings of its history, in these respects, are not lost upon us and our posterity.

While the blind instincts of an uneducated or a vicious population often hurry them into sedition, refractory insubordination, and every species of lawless violence, the informed mind, and strong moral sense of the great mass among us, make them conscious that, however sophistry may elsewhere disguise the great truth, or false systems of policy may delude or degrade the lower classes, and then subject them to endure, tamely, humiliation from their fellow-mortals, or inflame them into madness and forcible vengeance against oppression, the just rule of conduct is always the same in public as in private affairs, and that in the end it is as ruinous to one as the other to have the right known and yet the wrong pursued. They are aware that if the population are habituated to think and act, even in politics alone, as mere Cossacks, serving, whether individuals, corporations, or parties, solely because the pay is highest, and the labor and danger, are supposed to be least; and if such mercenaries ever inquire into what is right, and knowledge in them, as in other cases, becomes power, still, without sound morals as its director and restraint, it becomes but the power of the blinded Cyclops, in his cave, useless to himself and harmless to his enemies. Or, if like Sampson's, destructive to his enemies, it is at the same time equally destructive to its possessor, crushing himself, ere long, with them, under the ruins of the overturned pillars of the social edifice.

We have not leisure to travel through the more modern revolutions, in the American annals, and to gather the numerous illustrations on this subject, written on the fair fields of South America, or Mexico, in blood and tears. Indeed, the first discoverers of the new world seem to have been, in many respects, the very least of its regenerators; and it is most lamentable in

their history, that they have received almost as little benefits in return at home, as they were unfortunate in conferring abroad.

In conclusion, therefore while meditating upon our own astonishing progress, as developed in history, and discriminating with care the origin alike of our perils and securities as a people, does it not behove us to weigh well the importance of our present position? Not our position merely with regard to foreign Powers. From them we have, by an early start and rapid progress in the cause of equal rights, long ceased to fear much injury or to hope for very essential aid, in our further efforts for the thorough improvement of the condition of society in all that is useful or commendable. Nor our position, however the true causes may be distorted or denied—our elevated position, in prosperity and honorable estimation, both at home and abroad. But it is our position, so highly responsible, as the only country where the growth of self-government seems fully to have ripened and to have become a model or example to other nations ; or, as the case may prove, their scoff and scorn.

To falter here, and now, would, therefore, probably be to cause the experiment of such a government to fail forever. It is not sufficient, in this position, to loathe servitude, or to love liberty with all the enthusiasm of Plutarch's heroes. But we must be warned by our history how to maintain liberty—how to grasp the substance rather than the shadow—to disregard rhetorical flourishes, unless accompanied by deeds—not to be cajoled by holiday finery, or pledges enough to carpet the polls, where integrity and burning zeal do not exist to redeem them—nor to permit ill-vaulting ambition to volunteer and vaunt its professions of ability as well as willingness to serve the people against their own government—any more than demagogues, in a rougher mood, with a view to rob you, sacrilegiously, of those principles, or undermine, with insidious pretensions, those equal institutions which your fathers bled to secure. Nor does true reform, however frequent in this position, and under those institutions, scarcely ever consist in violence, or what usually amounts to revolution, the sacred right of which, by force or rebellion, in extreme cases of oppression, being seldom necessary to be exer-

cised here, because reform is one of the original elements of those institutions, and one of their great, peaceable, and prescribed objects. However the timid, then, may fear, or the wealthy denounce its progress, it is the principal safety-valve of our system, rather than an explosion to endanger or destroy it. We should also weigh well our delicate position as the sole country whither the discontented in all others resort freely, and while conforming to the laws, abide securely; and whither the tide of emigration, whether for good or evil, seems each year setting with increased force.

When we reflect on these circumstances, with several others, which leisure does not permit me to enumerate; and when we advert to some of the occurrences in our social and political condition, within the few last years, appearing worse, it is feared, than the slight irregularities and outbreaks of great freedom, on such periodical excitements as elections; and looking rather, in some cases, like more grave departures from legal subordination, and attended, as they have been, on different occasions, and in different quarters, by no feeble indications of obliquity of principle, in morals as well as politics, evinced by violent aggressions, not only on person and property, but the rights of conscience and of free discussion—while we see all this, what does our delicate and peculiar position teach, as to the perils of American liberty? What warning spirit breathes from those events? What inferences should philosophy and sober judgment draw from their history?

Is it not manifest that the danger now to be guarded against is one arising rather from too little than too much control on the part of the Government; too little rather than too much reverence for the constitution, the supremacy of the laws, and the sacredness of personal rights as well as those of property; and if not an undue homage to mere wealth, still too great presumptuousness from the enjoyment of such unexampled prosperity? Looking higher and deeper, is there not seen, also, too much indifference beginning to be entertained in some quarters, with regard to the perpetuity of the Union?—that political marriage of the States, upon which, like that of our first parents, “all

heaven and happy constellations shed their selectest influence.” Does there not exist too great an apathy respecting our imperative and lofty duty not to disappoint, in any way, the aspirations and the confidence of the patriot or the philanthropist, in every country directed towards us for the conservation of all the best hopes of the human race? Suspecting, then, some such evil tendencies—feeling such doubts, and fearing such dangers, what do our annals point out as the true republican remedy to check them? Not, we trust, a revival—in substance any more than in form—of the stronger arm of monarchical power which preceded the Revolution. By no means. Not, in any crisis, rushing for preservation from outrage or for rescue from anarchy and licentiousness to stronger systems of government—to what, it is hoped, we all deprecate and dread in unnecessary restraints on individual liberty and more arbitrary establishments, under the pretence of aids, though in reality often the most dangerous weapons wielded by the arm of civil power. Never, never. Nor yet a change in our codes of law, harshly increasing their severity, conferring unequal privileges, or perpetuating exclusive powers, at the expense of the birthright and liberties of others. Nor an elevation of property and its possessors to greater dominion over the rights of persons, when its strides have already been so colossal, and its influence so overwhelming.

Neither ought we to indulge in despondency, however apprehensive, with the great blind bard of modern times, that, in some respects, we “have fallen on evil days and evil tongues;” and however conscious that, as a people, we are not entirely free from foibles, errors, and crime, in this erring world, and have not been able to reach every excellence as a nation, or to mature every political security of which our constitutions are susceptible, in the brief period of about half a century.

On the contrary, it behoves us to look our perils and difficulties, such as they are, in the face. Then, with the exercise of candor, calmness, and fortitude, being able to comprehend fully their character and extent, let us profit by the teachings of almost every page in our annals, that any defects under our existing system have resulted more from the manner of admin-

istering it than from its substance or form. We less need new laws, new institutions, or new powers, than we need, on all occasions, at all times, and in all places, the requisite intelligence concerning the true spirit of our present ones; the high moral courage under every hazard, and against every offender, to execute with fidelity the authority already possessed; and the manly independence to abandon all supineness, irresolution, vacillation, and time-serving pusillanimity, and enforce our present mild system with that uniformity and steady vigor throughout, which alone can supply the place of the greater severity of less free institutions. To encourage us in renewed efforts to accomplish every thing on this subject which is desirable, our history constantly points her finger to a most efficient resource and indeed to the only elixir, to secure a long life to any popular government, in increased attention to useful education and sound morals, with the wise description of equal measures and just practices they inculcate on every leaf of recorded time. Before their alliance the spirit of misrule will always in time stand rebuked, and those who worship at the shrine of unhallowed ambition must quail. Storms in the political atmosphere may occasionally happen by the encroachments of usurpers, the corruption or intrigues of demagogues, or in the expiring agonies of faction, or by the sudden fury of popular phrensy; but with the restraints and salutary influences of the allies before described, these storms will purify as healthfully as they often do in the physical world, and cause the tree of liberty, instead of falling, to strike its roots deeper. In this struggle the enlightened and moral possess also a friend, auxiliary and strong, in the spirit of the age, which is not only with them, but onward, in every thing to ameliorate or improve. When the struggle assumes the form of a contest with power in all its subtlety, or with undermining and corrupting wealth, as it sometimes may, rather than with turbulence, sedition, or open aggression, by the needy and desperate, it will be indispensable to employ still greater vigilance—to cherish earnestness of purpose, resoluteness in conduct—to apply hard and constant blows to real abuses, rather than milk-and-water remedies, and encourage not only bold, free, and original

thinking, but determined action. In such a cause our fathers were men whose hearts were not accustomed to fail them through fear, however formidable the obstacles. Some of them were companions of Cromwell, and imbued deeply with his spirit and iron-decision of character, in whatever they deemed right: "If Pope, and Spaniard, and devil, (said he,) all set themselves against us, though they should compass us about as bees, as it is in the 18th Psalm, yet in the name of the Lord we will destroy them." We are not, it is trusted, such degenerate descendants as to prove recreant, and fail to defend, with gallantry and firmness as unflinching, all which we either derived from them, or have since added to the rich inheritance.

New means and energies can yearly be brought to bear on the further enlightening of the public mind. Self-interest, respectability in society, official rank, wealth, superior enjoyment, are all held out as the rewards of increased intelligence and good conduct. The untaught in letters, as well as the poor in estate, cannot long close their eyes or their judgments to those great truths of daily occurrence in our history. They cannot but feel that the laws, when duly executed, ensure these desirable ends in a manner even more striking to themselves and children, drudges and serfs as they may once have been, than to the learned, wealthy, or great. They see the humblest log-cabin rendered as secure a castle as the palace, and the laborer in the lowest walks of life as quickly entitled to the benefit of a *habeas corpus* when imprisoned without warrant of law, as the highest in power, and assured of as full and ready redress for personal violence, and of indemnity as ample for injury to character or damage to property. Not a particle of his estate, though but a single ewe-lamb in the Western wilderness, or the most sterile acre on the White mountains, can be taken away with impunity, though by the most powerful, without the voluntary consent of the indigent owner, nor even be set apart for public purposes, without the same necessities and the same just compensation awarded as in case of the greatest.

To any man thus situated, any thing agrarian about property would be as ruinous, looking to the prosperity of himself and to

his family in future, as it would be to the wealthy now. Political and civil rights being made equal, it becomes much better, no less for the poor but well-informed and enterprising, than for the cause of society and virtue at large, as well as the present safety of the rich, that the future acquisitions of property, power, and honor, should all generally be rendered proportionate to the future industry, good conduct, and improved talents of every individual.

Thus labor and capital here are made to have but one true interest, and to find that "self-love and social are the same."

The scourges of avarice, in its too great voracity for wealth or capital, will always be the irregular depredations on it of labor, if left badly paid or badly taught, and the true blessings of labor will be its honest and timely acquisitions of capital, if made able to learn and practise its appropriate duties as well as rights. Then, though steadfast and zealous in resisting the seductions of power, the timidities of sloth, the effeminacy of luxury, and the mercenary, sordid spirit of mere gain, the working classes, will, at the same time, be careful to shape and crowd forward all their claims in subjection to order, and in the safe channels of law and well-regulated liberty.

It would hardly be necessary, before this assembly, to advance any further arguments deduced from our history in proof of the peculiar importance, or indeed vitality, of sound morals as well as sound education, in such a government as ours, at all times, and more especially in periods of increased peril. They, indeed always constitute a power higher than the law itself, and possess a healthy vigor much beyond the law. Nor, under our admirable system, does the promotion of morality require any, as mere citizens, to aid it, through political favor, to the cause of any particular creed of religion, however deep may be our individual convictions of its truth or importance beyond all the world can give or the world take away. Our public associations for purposes of government now wisely relate to secular concerns alone.

Surely, any of us can be the worthy descendants of the Puritans without being, after the increased lights of two hundred more years, puritanical, in the indulgence of bigotry or in

placing any reliance on the dangerous, and it is hoped exploded, union of church and state for public security.

On the contrary, the progress of temperance, the improvement in household comforts, the wider diffusion of knowledge as well as of competency in property, and the association, so intimate and radical, between enlarged intelligence and the growth of moral worth and even religious principle, with the advantages all mutually confer and receive, constitute our safest dependance and exhibit a characteristic, striking and highly creditable to our whole country, as well as in some degree to the present age. If, constantly reinforced by those exertions of the enlightened, the virtuous, and the talented, which they can well spare, and which duty, honor, and safety demand, they seem to encourage strong hopes that the arm of the law will not hereafter be so often palsied by any moral indifference among the people at large, or in any quarter, as to its strength to guide as well as hold the helm.

At such a crisis, therefore, and in such a cause, yielding to neither consternation nor despair, may we not all profit by the vehement exhortations of Cicero to Atticus: "If you are asleep, awake; if you are standing, move; if you are moving, run; if you are running, fly."

All these considerations warn us—the grave-stones of almost every former republic warn us—that a high standard of moral rectitude, as well as of intelligence, is quite as indispensable to communities in their public doings as to individuals, if they would escape from either degeneracy or disgrace.

There need be no morbid delicacy in employing on this subject a tone at once plain and fearless. Much of our own history unites in admonishing all, that those public doings should be characterized, when towards the members of the same confederacy, not by exasperations or taunts, but by mutual concessions, in cases of conflicting claims—by amicable compromises where no tribunal is provided for equal arbitration—by exact justice to the smallest as well as to the largest State; and through all irritations and rebuffs, the more bitter often because partaking of the freedom of their family origin, by an inflexible

adherence to that spirit of conciliation, and to that cultivation of harmony, through mutual affection and mutual benefits rather than force, which, honorable, if not always honored, formed and has hitherto sustained our happy Union.

When towards other nations they should evince what Anderson, half a century ago, considered "the best temper of government, neither to do a wrong or take it." By the aid of such an example here, with our abhorrence of the spirit of conquest, and our devotion to a mutual interchange among all nations of only favors, rather than injuries, it is believed that the art of printing, so widely diffused as it has been of late, and the greater facilities of communication between most parts of the known world by means of an increasing commerce and wider employment of machinery and steam, are fast creating a great tribunal, even on earth, for the moral judgment, and we hope, improvement of all nations. Public opinion is in this way yearly becoming more pervading among every civilized people, more enlightened, and, therefore, with safety and advantage, more omnipotent. May it not be hoped that all nations as well as our own are thus receiving some stronger impulses towards a higher state of refinement, both intellectual and moral?

In fine, it is believed that our convictions must strengthen, as researches into history and its true philosophy penetrate wider and deeper; that, should the experiment of self-government and increased civil freedom fail in this country, where the most flattering prospect appears to exist of perfecting far as practicable the condition of our species, and accomplishing soonest the probable though in some degree mysterious end of their creation, it requires not the spirit of prophecy to predict that less hope exists in favor of the success of such an experiment elsewhere, and that any nearer approach to the golden age of equal liberty, and the more universal diffusion of moral and religious as well as intellectual and political light, must be regarded as reserved only for some Utopia of the imagination, or some miraculous millenium of Christianity.

NOTES.

[Several portions of the preceding Address were omitted in the delivery, from fear of being tedious. A few details were originally flung into Notes, which are annexed.]

A.—Page 7.

Three or four illustrations of our recent progress on some of these subjects may perhaps be usefully noticed.

COTTON.

- 1.—The exports of raw cotton, in 1825, amounted to - 176,500,000 pounds.
Do in 1835, do - 386,500,000 “
- 2.—Raw cotton consumed or manufactured in the United States in 1825, amounted to - - - - 50,000,000 “
Do in 1835, amounted to 100,000,000 “
- 3.—Imports of cotton goods into United States, from all countries,
in 1825, value - \$12,509,516
Do in 1835, only - 15,367,585
- 4.—Exports of cotton goods from United States in 1825, foreign 3,784,692
Do domestic so small not designated.
Do in 1835, foreign - 3,697,837
Do domestic - 2,858,681

See more in the Tables and Notes on Cotton, submitted by me to Congress at its last session.

COAL.

Quantity of Coal imported into the United States.

In 1825, bushels, 722,255; value \$108,527.

In 1835, do. 1,679,119; do. 143,461.

The domestic product, though vastly increased, does not prevent the imports from having nearly doubled in quantity in ten years, though the price has sensibly fallen.

LEAD.

Statement of the quantity and value of Lead imported into the United States during the years ending on the 30th September, 1825, and on the 30th September, 1835.

		Quantity, lbs.	Value.
Year ending 30th September, 1825,	- -	5,867,520	\$293,864
Do. do. 1835,	- -	1,006,472	35,663

The domestic product now supplies almost the whole consumption.

SALT.

1.—The salt manufactured in the United States amounted, in 1830, to above three and a half millions of bushels; two-fifths of which was made in the State of New-York.

2.—Salt made in 1835, about 5,000,000 bushels—the proportion manufactured in New-York being about the same.

3.—Quantity imported in 1830, about 5,374,046 bushels; in 1835, about 5,375,364 bushels.

The domestic product now supplies all the increased consumption by our additional population, and near half of all the consumption of the whole Union.

These remarks and statistical details on the above and other articles, with numerous similar ones, might be largely extended, if space permitted and the occasion were suitable.

B.—Page 8.

The republication of the Journals of the Old Congress, the printing of the Proceedings of the Convention which formed the Constitution, and the collection and publication of our Diplomatic Correspondence, have done for this branch of history much service. They have been followed, as illustrative of a still later period, by the State Papers of Wait, the Executive Senate Journals, and the new Documents, as well as excellent arrangement of the old ones, both Executive and Legislative, in the compilation ordered by Congress a few years since, under the memorial of, and printed by, Messrs. Gales & Seaton. Much is anticipated from the work, now partly completed by Messrs. Force & Clark, illustrating the Documentary History of the American Revolution.

C.—Page 9.

The particulars for inquiry would especially include its legislation and judiciary, its army and navy, commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, its mints, currency and banks, its medals and coins, its hospitals and fine arts, its revenues and expenditures, exports and imports, the extent and character of all public property, elections and wars, roads and canals, temperatures and

storms, the most important vegetables and animals, wild or domestic, and the national civil improvements and enterprises of every essential character, from breakwaters, dry docks, and various public buildings, to the manufacture and uniformity of weights and measures, and the advancing survey of our extensive sea-coasts. More connected with the different States, but still within the scope of our researches, at the centre of them all, would be the character and progress of these several subjects among each of them, adding the great features in their local occupations and manners, amusements, theatres, and fashions, religion and literature, diseases and superstitions, pauper systems, statistics of crime, marriages, deaths, and population, police, and general state of the arts, education, and morals.

A portion of these inquiries, with other similar ones, and their continuance yearly, would afford a most interesting, useful, and ample employment for some public department of Government, furnished with power and resources to push them widely, and with energy and accuracy. Whether called a home department, a domestic one, or one for the interior, would be of less importance than the powers conferred, and the talent and industry exclusively devoted to it.

D.—Page 13.

A small number of the causes of failures in Indian civilization can be accurately detected from our histories, and fully exposed for warning and correction.

Sometimes the love of conquest has irritated a jealous race, and defeated all prospect of immediate improvement. Sometimes a zeal without knowledge has too hastily required their assent to principles of religion and conduct, which only a high degree of intelligence could properly appreciate. Sometimes the cursed thirst for gold has wantonly plunged them into wars. Sometimes an encroaching spirit for more fertile valleys and prairies has goaded them into border wars, or vindictive and bloody aggressions and ruin! Sometimes, in self-defence, we may have fomented their internal divisions, and aggravated their neighbouring jealousies, revenges, and hostilities! Sometimes they have refused the useful arts, because more laborious than the chase! Sometimes derided letters, because more enervating and unmanly than war! Sometimes our traders have tempted their appetites for the poisonous distillations of art, rather than encourage them in agriculture or manufactures! Sometimes we have acted without system or principle, and, in the festering feelings from savage obstinacy and atrocities, have left almost every thing to private cupidity or avarice, and afterwards, by the recoil of the spring, resorted to measures more strict and uniform than their undisciplined condition rendered at first wise. The true philosophy of their history seems to be, that the Indians, if we would do any thing to improve them durably, must be more regarded as in a state of pupilage, being, in many respects, but children of a larger growth; as too ignorant for forming many wise institu-

tions of their own, and hence properly subject to discreet restraints by us on their moral errors as well as political power, through a useful internal police and government, prescribed for them in the true spirit and kindness of guardians rather than of conquerors. Wayward children! They are also to be gradually weaned from the wild habits of the forest and thirst for war, animated with new tastes and ambitions, and invested with the individual rights of property, and encouraged to the cultivation and acquisition of the soil and the arts of civilized life. All this is to be pursued with system and perseverance, till the whole native mass becomes changed, and adequate to the task of entire and judicious self-government.

Then, and not till then, can they usefully be permitted, encouraged and confirmed in the equal and independent exercise of it.

We must begin to erect the social edifice among them at the foundation, and broadly—not at the summit, or, like an inverted pyramid, liable to be overturned by every breath of discontent.

E.—Page 22.

Some of the Eastern States, beside special school funds, literary funds, and large sums voluntarily contributed yearly by individuals for private instruction, now raise, by ordinary taxation, an amount equal to near half a dollar per head on their whole population. This, in the New England States alone, would amount to almost a million of dollars annually, or if adopted in the whole Union, to six or seven millions.

The colleges in our country which confer degrees, without enumerating numerous academies, or any inferior schools, private or public, have increased to the large number of near 100, with near 7,000 undergraduates. These are yearly becoming better adapted to the purposes of general education, and most of them less confined than formerly to the mere special advancement in any of the learned professions; while others, more exclusively designed for the last, have multiplied so as to make near 40 theological seminaries, about 25 medical schools, and 8 or 10 law schools. Many lyceums and institutes of a useful character have been added, and the whole course of instruction, within a few years, has received a much wider and more practical range. Congress has conducted liberally in this respect, as well as about higher seminaries, by large grants of valuable lands to most of the new States; and has also made wise provision for educating its young officers in the army and navy. How much further it will feel authorized to go on these points, in the old States, or in aid of the endowments of universities, at the Seat of Government, by liberal foreigners for the diffusion of useful knowledge, are questions not appropriate for discussion on the present occasion.

F.—Page 31.

What more ought still to be expected from us, from the spirit of adventure to distant regions, resulting from equal rights, liberal enterprise, and just rela-

tions, more firmly established and more fostered and aided by Government ? How much more when our citizens, individually, or by private associations, under the guide of their persevering intelligence, have already spread their explorations for so many objects of novelty and curiosity, as well as profit, over so many regions of the globe, however remote, barbarous, or dangerous ? When, beside their whaling from the icebergs of the north to the equator, in every sea, they have sought out the seal on many a coral reef ; discovered and cut sandal wood for China upon one island ; cured for her *biche le mer* on another ; imported pearl-shells from others, for ornamental and useful manufactures ; gathered pepper on the coast of Sumatra ; collected wool in the wilds of New-Holland, and furs on the northwest coast ; penetrated the forests of eastern Africa for India-rubber, to meet the demands for its vastly increasing use here in many of the most important purposes of manufacture and social comfort ; established commercial relations with a Sultan in the Gulf of Arabia and the Red Sea, whose navies are larger and dominions wider than those of Solomon in his most palmy days ; enabled us to form useful treaties with Kings in the farthest East, and to bring home countless other articles from Asia, Europe, and Africa, calculated to solace, enrich or improve the human family.

ENTRANCE
MAY
STATION
PAT. 11